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## BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON ERNST WOLLWEBER, NEW GDR SECURITY CHIEF

In addition to his post of State Secretary for Water Transport, Ernst Wollweber is also chief of the State Security Service of the German Democratic Republic.

Wollweber was born on 28 October 1898, the son of a Silesian miner. After the death of his father in France during 1915, he became a port laborer in Hamburg, until he was called to duty with the German Imperial Navy. Two years later, Wollweber, a stoker, arrived in Bremen with revolting sailors on the HMS Helgoland. This marked the beginning of his political career. As early as 1920 the KFD (Communist Party of Germany) sent him to Moscow. Since the route via Poland was blocked due to the Polish-Soviet fighting, Wollweber and his comrades forced the captain of a fishing vessel to bring them to a Soviet port. Stalin, who once in his youth had been a bank robber, became quite amused over this "act of piracy" of the young German, and friendly relations developed.

Wollweber was a member of an illegal secret Communist organization, which Was set up according to a decision made at the Second World Congress of the Communist International in August 1920. In 1924, the KFD sent him to Moscow for the second time, to complete "the military school," where he received special training.

Upon his return from Moscow, Wollweber became manager of the Red seamen's home in Hamburg. In order to gain parliamentary immunity, he was made a Communist candidate for the Prussian Landtag and was elected. Later, he even became a member of the Reichstag.

When the Nazis came to power, Wollweber left Germany. His first stop was Copenhagen. The once-robust sailor had by then become fat and flabby. Only in one way did Wollweber remain a sailor: in his relations with women. He spent

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his evenings in port taverns and his nights with sailors' brides. The Comintern was not at all pleased with his loose way of living and ordered him to marry a Norwegian commade, Ragnhild Wiik, a pretty and clever girl. Both transferred their activities to Oslo.

Wollweber became the chief of an international organization of saboteurs, whose chain of sabotage acts and explosions on ships of all nations shocked the entire world in the mid-thirties. He was arrested in Sweden. Aleksandra Kollontay, Soviet Ambassador to Stockholm, demanded Wollweber't deportation, accusing him of embezzling funds of the USSR. The Swedish government was thus forced to turn him over to the USSR -- a successful maneuver to save Wollweber.

Wollweber showed up in the East Zone of Germany in mid-April 1946. Fitzner, chief of the Central Administration for Transportation of the East Zone, introduced him to his collaborators as "the sailor Wollweber" and made no mention of any of the feats credited to him; perhaps he was not aware of them. At first, the officials of the Central Administration were amused by Wollweber's comical fat figure. However, the amusement stopped as soon as Wollweber went into action. He established a seamen's school in Klein-Machnow near Berlin. After satisfactory completion of this school, the student was eligible to attend the school at Ladebow near Greifswald. While the subjects at the Klein-Machnow school were Marxism and similar matters, the Ladebow school had more concrete subjects. Wollweber's former staff of saboteurs was apprehended, even his wife Ragnhild was executed. But they were replaced by Ladebow trainees. The numerous sabotage acts on Western warships and commercial vessels can undoubtably be credited to Wollweber and his Ladebow-trained agents.

Wollweber's new appointment is indeed alarming. It merges counterintelligence and active espionage and sabotage activities. Wollweber, the sailor of in the German Democratic Republic.

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